

The Meaning of the Sannyasa Ashram

by

**His Holiness Tridandipada
Bhakti Gaurava Narasingha Maharaja**

**President Acharya of the
International Gaudiya Vaishnava Society**

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Sri Guru Gauranga Jayatah

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INQUIRIES

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To
Our Beloved Spiritual Master
and
Our Beloved Guardian of Devotion

Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya
His Divine Grace
Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada

and

Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya
His Divine Grace
Srila Bhakti Rakshaka
Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja

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**His Holiness Tridandipada
Bhakti Gaurava Narasingha Maharaja**



**His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada**



**His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshaka
Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja**

The Meaning of the Sannyasa Ashram

The following is a lecture given on Radhastami day, August 28, 1990 at the sannyasa initiation ceremony of His Holiness Bhakti Gaurava Vaishnava Maharaja conducted by His Holiness Swami Sripada Bhakti Gaurava Narasingha Maharaja at Sri Rupanuga Bhajan Ashram, International Gaudiya Vaishnava Society, Sri Vrndavana Dham.

We shall begin this function of the *sannyasa* initiation of Sriman Dhurdarshana Prabhu on this auspicious day of the appearance of Srimati Radharani with a reading from the *Golden Volcano* compiled by the Grand Guardian of Devotion and Topmost Paramahansa among the members of the renounced order of life, His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja.

THE TRAGEDY OF SEPARATION

According to solar calculation, it was on the day of Makara-sankranti, an auspicious day when the sun enters Capricorn, that Nimai Pandit went to Katwa to take sannyasa, the renounced order of life.

The day known as *Makara-sankranti* generally falls in the month of January. It is the day when the

sun crosses over the meridian and returns to the northern hemisphere. It is considered a very auspicious time.

The day of *Makara-sankranti* also corresponds to the auspicious day when Visvarupa, the older brother of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who had left home to wander throughout India as a *sannyasi*, entered *samadhi* and departed from this world at the holy place known as Pandrapura. *Makara-sankranti* is also the day on which Grandfather Bishma returned Back to Godhead and the day on which the famous Kumbha Mela festival begins. It is among the best of auspicious days and so Nimai Pandit went to Katwa to take *sannyasa* on that day.

After this, He would become known as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He swam across the Ganges and in wet cloth ran towards Katwa. Just before this, He told only a few of His friends, including Nityananda Prabhu, Gadadhara Pandit, Mukunda, and others, "The time when I will accept the robe of renunciation is very near."

INCONCEIVABLE BY ANYONE

Householder men in India often speak like that, "Oh, Swamiji, they say, "I'm going to renounce, I'm going to take *sannyasa* soon." So when some-

one says like that, "Ah yes!", but no one takes him seriously. Just like, we have one godbrother in Hawaii and he is always saying, "Maharaja, I'm going to take *sannyasa*, I'm going to take *sannyasa*!" but we don't take it very seriously.

Similarly Nimai Pandit was saying, "Yes the time is near." Some may have taken Him seriously but who could have thought it possible? Nimai Pandit was only twenty four years old, His mother Sacidevi was there, His beautiful young wife, Vishnupriya, was there. How would it be possible that Nimai Pandit could leave His house and Navadwip with all His friends forever to wander in the robes of renunciation? It was fully unthought-of, inconceivable by anyone.

Just a few days before this, an opposition party had been raised against Nimai Pandit. Those who believed that material nature is the highest principle, and that consciousness is a product of matter, began to abuse Nimai Pandit. He thought, "I came to deliver the lowest of men, but if they commit offenses against Me, there will be no hope for their upliftment." Suddenly, He said, "I came with the medicine which gives the greatest relief, but now I find that their disease is rapidly growing worse and seems beyond treatment. It will take its own course towards doom. The patients are making arrangements to insult Me. They take it that I am a family man—their nephew. They take Me as one of them.

I came with the best medicine for the present degraded age, but now I find that they are plotting against Me. Now they are doomed. At least I have to show them that I am not one of them." He thought, "I shall leave family life and take sannyasa and wander from village to village, town to town, preaching the holy name of Krishna." That was His decision, and within a few days He went to take sannyasa at Katwa from Kesava Bharati Maharaja.

Tridandi Sannyasis sometimes go to Katwa to get inspiration for preaching Krishna consciousness and following in the footsteps of Mahaprabhu. But for the residents of Navadwip it is not a happy place. Katwa is the place where a great tragedy took place. It is the place where they lost their Nimai Pandit forever.

When the yearly anniversary of Mahaprabhu's taking *sannyasa* is observed by the residents of Navadwip, it is not a happy time, they lament the coming of this day. Many of the devotees of Mahaprabhu at Navadwip, such as those in the ashram of Srila Sridhar Maharaja, abstain from taking any kind of nice food for several days before Makara-sankranti. They take only a very simple boiled rice and dahl prasadam during that time. A great tragedy of separation will occur on that day, so how can they bear the thought in any happy way. A great tragedy is about to take place!

THE LAST NIGHT

Just the day before He left to take sannyasa, from the afternoon until the evening, there was a spontaneous gathering of devotees in the home of Nimai Pandit. Every year in Bengal, that day was celebrated as Laksmi-puja, worship of the goddess of fortune, when special cakes are prepared and distributed. Nimai, knowing that early the next morning He would leave Navadwip to take sannyasa, attracted His followers in such a way that almost every leading devotee came to see Him that evening.

They came with flower garlands and many other offerings to be presented to the Lord. Nimai accepted their garlands and then placed them on the necks of the devotees who gave them. Only four of His most intimate devotees knew He was leaving; the ordinary devotees did not know this would be His last night in Navadwip. With His own hands He garlanded the necks of His devotees and appealed to them, "Always chant the name of Krishna. Under no condition should you give up this krishna-nama. And don't do anything else. While working, eating, sleeping or waking, day or night, in whatever you do, continuously take the name of Krishna. Always talk about Krishna and nothing else. If you have any real attraction or affection for Me then don't do anything without chanting the name Krishna.

Cultivate Krishna consciousness. Krishna is the origin of us all. He is our father we have come from Him. The son who shows no gratitude towards the father is sure to be punished

birth after birth. Always chant these names of the lord:

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

No other religious principle is required. Chant Hare Krishna! This is not an ordinary mantra, But this is the maha-mantra, the greatest of all the mantras known to the world. Only take to this, always. No other prescription is to be followed.

Remember your Lord, your home. This is a foreign land; you have nothing to aspire after here. Try always to go back to Godhead." In this way, the Lord spoke, and all His devotees intuitively came because it was Nimai Pandit's last night in Navadwip.

That night, one devotee named Sridhar Kholaveca arrived. He used to make trade on the plantain tree and its fruit. He would sell the fruit, ripe or green, and the big leaves which are used as plates. Sometimes Nimai would pay him less for his fruits than what they were worth, and sometimes He would snatch the best fruits from him. Sridhar came to see Him late at night to offer Him a choice pumpkin. And Nimai thought, "I have spent almost My whole life snatching so many things from him and now, on this last night he has brought this wonderful pumpkin. I can't resist." He asked Sacidevi, "Mother, Sridhar has given Me this pumpkin. Please think of how it can be prepared." At bedtime, someone came with some milk. Nimai said, "Mother, with this milk and this pumpkin, please prepare some sweet-rice." So Sacidevi prepared some pumpkin sweet-rice: pumpkin boiled with milk, rice, and sugar.

It is said that when Nimai Pandit was a youth He sometime stole the fruits and vegetables that Sridhar Kholaveca grew in his garden and sold in the market place. Sometimes Nimai Pandit and his friends would snatch the fruits from Sridhar while he was in the market and run away with them without paying. Sridhar was very poor but still Nimai used to steal his fruits.

At night Nimai and his friends would enter the garden of Sridhar under the cover of a blanket. From outside the garden it appeared as though some large creature, a buffalo or a bear, was in the garden. Seeing this Sridhar and others were afraid to enter the garden to chase off the beast. But it was only Nimai and His friends. Under the blanket they were eating the fruits and vegetables.

Nimai Pandit constantly did all these things to Sridhar and then on His last night in Navadwip, Sridhar came and presented the Lord with a beautiful pumpkin.

Late at night, at about three o' clock in the morning, Nimai went away. He left Visnupriya-devi asleep in bed. His mother Sacidevi, sensing what was to come, was staying awake all night guarding the door. Nimai left. She could not say anything, but was struck dumb.

A little after three o' clock in the morning, Nimai swam across the Ganges and in His wet cloth went straight to

Katwa, a distance of twenty-five miles. He reached there by nine or ten o' clock. There, He approached Kesava Bharati to take sannyasa.

In the early morning, the devotees came to see Nimai and found Sacidevi like a statue, sitting at the door. The door was open. Everything was empty. "What's the matter Sacidevi?" they asked. She told them, "Oh, I was waiting for you devotees. You take possession of the house. I shall go somewhere else. I can't enter this house any more. You are His devotees; you are the true heirs. Take possession." They began to throng around her and console her. "You will go? What about the young wife He left? The girl is only fourteen years old. Who will protect her? You can't shun the responsibility given to you. It is on your shoulders." In this way they came and consoled her and tried to give her some hope.

KATWA

Suddenly, the devotees heard that Nimai Pandit, Sri Gauranga, had left Navadwip. They learned that He had gone to Katwa, to Kesava Bharati's ashram to take sannyasa, bidding goodbye to the people of Navadwip forever.

A dark shadow came down. Many began to weep and cry for Him. Many of them ran towards Katwa. Nimai Pandit was an unprecedented scholar with beautiful features-tall, fair and benevolent. He had already made the people mad with

the holy name of Krishna. He had released the two great sinners Jagai and Madhai from their nasty life. He had checked the Mohammedan ruler, the Kazi, who had broken the mridanga drum. As a famous pandit, He had defeated many scholars who came to conquer Navadwip, which was very much renowned for its high culture of learning, especially of logic.

At that time in Navadwip, logic (nyaya), worship of material energy (tantra), and official Hinduism (smṛti), were in high culture. Navadwip was highly renowned for scholarship. If Pandits could not defeat the scholars of Navadwip, they could not become famous. From far away in Kashmir, Kesava Kashmiri had to come to Navadwip to get a certificate that he was a pandit. And he was defeated by Nimai Pandit. Kesava Kashmiri was such a big pandit that it was rumored he was the favorite child of Saraswati, the goddess of learning. No one could face him. Still, he was defeated by Nimai Pandit.

But Nimai Pandit left Navadwip forever and took sannyasa because the people of Navadwip could not appreciate Him.

Here it is said that the residents of Navadwip did not appreciate the Lord. This is not in reference to the Lord's devotees but to the nondevotee class of men. The devotees at Navadwip very much appreciated the Lord yet many people were avoiding His *sankirtan* movement.

He reached Katwa, where, just on the banks of the Ganges, there was a sannyasi: Kesava Bharati. Nimai went to him and asked him for sannyasa. Kesava Bharati suddenly found that his ashram was full of luster. At first, it seemed as if the sun was rising before him; then he saw that it was a bright person approaching. He rose from his seat, and with strained eyes approached in wonder. "What is this?" he thought.

Then he realized that the great devotee-scholar, Nimai Pandit, had come. He appeared before him saying, "I want to take sannyasa from you." But Kesava Bharati could not accept Nimai's offer. "I am charmed by Your beauty and personality," he said." But You are so young, only twenty-four years old. What about Your mother, Your wife, and Your guardians? Without consulting with them, I cannot venture to give You the robe of renunciation."

In the meantime, as it was Makara-sankranti, a famous holiday, many people had come to take bath in the holy waters of the Ganges. They gathered there and the rumor spread like fire: "Nimai Pandit of Navadwip has come to take sannyasa." Many men flocked there, until a huge crowd gathered.

They all opposed Mahaprabhu's sannyasa. Some of them raised their voices in protest: "You, Kesava Bharati! We won't allow you to give sannyasa to this young man. He has His family, His mother and wife. We won't allow it. If you give sannyasa to this charming, young, beautiful boy, we will break down your ashram immediately. It can't be!"

IT CAN NOT HAPPEN!

It is a peculiar thing but in India even though everyone is respecting a *sannyasi*, if by chance a member of the family or the village wants to take *sannyasa*, everyone will oppose it. If any *sannyasi* comes to the village or the house they will say, "Oh Maharaja please come, please come, take Prasadam, *pranams*, *pranams*!" But if anyone from the family comes out and says, "Yes, I will take *sannyasa*," then, "NO! NO! We will not allow you to do such a horrible thing!"

Many residents of Navadwip came to protest the *sannyasa* of Nimai Pandit. Their protests were rightfully so. Nimai was very young and generally *sannyasa* is meant for the older members of society not the mere children. Nimai had a widow mother and a young wife to take care of also. How could He leave them for renunciation? Nor could His devotees bear the thought of His separation. How could they bear the sight of their beautiful Nimai with a shaven head, devoid of His ornaments and dressed in the red robes of a renunciate? Such things they could not bear. For this reason everyone was protesting.

But Nimai Pandit kept pressing for sannyasa. At last, Kesava Bharati asked Him, "So, You are that Nimai Pandit

about whom we have heard so much? Many big scholars came to conquer Navadvip, the famous seat of learning, and You have defeated them all. Are you that Nimai pandit?" "Yes," said Nimai. Kesava Bharati told Him, "I can give You sannyasa, but You must take the permission of Your mother—otherwise I won't, I can't do it." Nimai suddenly began running towards Navadvip to ask permission, but Kesava Bharati thought, "He has such a commanding personality, He can do anything."

Nimai was called back. Kesava Bharati told Him, "With Your most extraordinary personality You can do anything. You will go there, charm Your guardians, get permission, and return. Nothing is impossible for you."

The ordinary public was very much enraged, saying to Kesava Bharati, "We can't allow you, Swamiji, to give sannyasa to this young boy. It is impossible! If you do, then we shall smash your ashram." Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu began performing Kirtana, chanting Hare Krishna and dancing madly. And the angry mob grew, sometimes creating a disturbance. In this way, the whole day passed with no decision. The night passed in sankirtan. And the next day, Nimai's will prevailed, although there was still some opposition.

Nityananda Prabhu, Nimai's maternal uncle Candrasekhara, Mukunda Datta and Jagadananda Pandit, gradually arrived there. And that afternoon, the sannyasa function began. Candrasekhara Acharya was asked to perform the ceremony on behalf of Nimai Pandit, who began to chant and dance and charm the audience.

lakṣa locanasru-varṣa-harṣa-keśa-kartanam
 koti-kantha-kṛṣṇa-kīrtanadhya-danda dharanam
 nyāsi-veśa-sarva-deśa-ha-hutaśa-kartaram
 prema-dhama-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram

"While showers of tears fell from the eyes of millions He delighted in having His beautiful hair shaved away. Millions of voices sang the glories of Krishna, as Sri Krishna Chaitanya accepted the staff of renunciation. From that time on, wherever He went, whoever saw Him in the dress of a sannyasi cried in grief. I sing the glories of that beautiful Golden God, the giver of divine love."

THE BARBER

The scene was at Katwa. Four-hundred and seventy-four years ago, Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu took sannyasa. He was young and beautiful, with a tall figure. He was only twenty-four and had beautiful curling hair. A barber was asked to shave Him, and approached Him, but then withdrew. The barber could not venture to touch Nityānanda's body. He began to cry. "How can I remove such beautiful hair from such a beautiful head?"

And so many others were also crying aloud, "What a horrible thing is being done here! Who is the creator of this

sannyasa? Who is so hard-hearted that he created the sannyasa-ashram, where one must give up all that is near and dear and go from door to door, begging, leaving his own friends and relatives crying helplessly? What is this creation of the Supreme? Is it logical? Is it a happy thing? It is most cruel!"

Nimai Pandit was smiling. After the barber was ordered repeatedly, somehow he was forced to shave Nimai's head. At first, he could not venture to touch His hair, saying, "I can't touch Him." But at last, he had to do the service of shaving the beautiful, curling hair of the beautiful face of the twenty-four year old genius boy. He began with his shears. Some people could not stand the scene. Some even became mad. In the midst of the weeping, wailing, and crying of the threatening mob, it was done.

Nimai Pandit was senseless. After being only half shaved, he stood up and began chanting in kirtan and dancing in ecstatic joy. After He was shaved, the barber promised, "I will never again shave anyone with this hand! I would rather live by begging. This is my last service as a barber." After this, that barber took up the occupation of a sweetmaker.

Ultimately Nimai's appeals pacified the mob, and a little before noon the inevitable gradually came: the sannyasa function was performed. Candrasekhara Acharya, the maternal uncle of Nimai Pandits, was deputed to take charge of the rituals in the ceremony of sannyasa. When the mantra was to be conferred, Nimai Pandit asked Kesava Bharati, "Is this the mantra you will give me? I heard it in a dream." He whispered the mantra in the ear of his guru who accepted,

saying, "Yes, this is the mantra I shall give you." Then the mantra was given."

MAHAPRABHU'S SANNYASA MANTRA

What happened is this. Keshava Bharati was a *sannyasi* in the line of Sripad Shankaracharya. Bharati is one of the ten principle names which are given to the *sannyasis* of Shankaracharya. Their *sannyasa mantra* is also given, "*tattvamasi*." That is the *mantra* accepted by all the *sannyasis* in the line of Shankaracharya.

Mahaprabhu knew that Keshava Bharati would give Him that *mantra* but Mahaprabhu did not like that. The meaning of *tattvamasi* is, "I am that." The *sannyasis* of Shankaracharya are thinking that they are one with the supreme *brahman*. They like to think that they are also Krishna.

This thought was unacceptable to Mahaprabhu. To think oneself equal to Krishna is the highest type of blasphemy. How could He accept that? Mahaprabhu then approached Murari Gupta and said, "My mind is disturbed. I had a dream and in my dream Keshava Bharati has given me the *mantra*, '*tattvamasi*.' I know the meaning of the *mantra*

and I cannot live with that. My mind is thus very disturbed!"

Murari Gupta then informed Mahaprabhu that there is another conception of the *mantra* which we can draw down. Murari Gupta said, "We can conceive the word '*tattvam*' according to '*sasthitat purusa samasa*' which means 'You are His.'" Mahaprabhu said, "That is very good. That I like, 'I am His.'"

Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya, Radha Krishna nahe anya, means that Mahaprabhu is non-different than Radha Krishna. He is Krishna coming in the mood of Radharani. Srimati Radharani is always feeling, "I am His, I am Krishna's and Krishna is mine." So, Mahaprabhu was very satisfied with that sort of conception.

Then Mahaprabhu called Keshava Bharati and informed him about His dream. "I had a dream and in My dream you gave Me one *mantra*. Can you tell Me, if this is the *mantra*?" Keshava Bharati said, "Oh, what is that *mantra*," and he gave his ear to Mahaprabhu who uttered the *mantra*.

It is said that when Mahaprabhu uttered the *mantra* in the ear of Keshava Bharati with the Vaishnava conception Keshava Bharati became initiated by Mahaprabhu and immediately became a Vaishnava.

The Krishna conception of the *mantra* deliv-

ered by Mahaprabhu was so powerful that Keshava Bharati immediately became a Vaishnava. "Ah, yes, he said, that is the *mantra* I will give you," and that *mantra* was then given to Mahaprabhu.

It is also said that Keshava Bharati was the same Akrura as in Krishna *lila*. The same Akrura who came to Vrndavana to take Krishna to Mathura and was opposed by the *gopis* came as Keshava Bharati to give *sannyasa* to Nimai Pandit and to take Him away from Navadwip. It is a parallel *lila*, Krishna *lila* and Gour *lila*. There was protest, but what could be done? The will of Nimai was supreme.

KRISHNA CHAITANYA

And the name of this sannyasi was not given in an ordinary way either. A most peculiar name came through Kesava Bharati: "Krishna Chaitanya." None of the names generally given to sannyasis was given to Nimai Pandit, but the name that was given to Him was Krishna Chaitanya. As soon as they heard that name, the mob began to cry, "Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ki jaya!" "All glories to Sri Krishna Chaitanya!"

The father of Srinivasa Acharya was a class-friend of Nimai Pandit. On his way to his father-in-law's house, he heard that Nimai Pandit had come to take sannyasa. He ran there, and seeing everything, he became dumb—he was

devastated and went half-mad. After that, nothing came from his mouth but "Chaitanya." After he heard the name "Krishna Chaitanya," whatever anyone said to him, he would only say, "Chaitanya!" He became mad. After that, his name became Chaitanya dasa. His former name vanished, and everyone used to call him Chaitanya dasa. He could not stand the scene of Nimai Pandit's sannyasa.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, newly dressed in red robes, embraced His guru, and both of them began to dance, chanting the name of Krishna. After some time, the meaning of the name was given. Kesava Bharati Maharaja said, "Sri Krishna Chaitanya means that You arouse Krishna consciousness throughout the entire world. You have descended to make all people Krishna conscious. So the most suitable name for You cannot but be Sri Krishna Chaitanya."

Mahaprabhu was very cheerful, thinking, "I am going to relieve so many souls from their eternal misery and affliction. I have promised to deliver the whole world from this ocean of misery and take them to the nectarine world, and now I am going to accept that task." He was cheerful, but everyone around Him was diving in the ocean of despair and sorrow.

Some scholars stress that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took sannyasa from Kesava Bharati, who was a mayavadi, an impersonalist. But although Kesava Bharati may have externally showed himself in that way, it is seen that by coming in connection with Mahaprabhu, he became a devotee. Otherwise, we may also think that he was a devotee who came in

the garb of an impersonalist to help the preaching of Mahaprabhu by assisting Him with the social formality of taking sannyasa. At that time, all over India, mayavadi sannyasis had greater recognition than Vaishnava sannyasis, and Kesava Bharati was already situated in that post. Mahaprabhu took the garb of a sannyasi from him for His own purpose, to help His preaching activity. All these things may be explained in different ways. In any case, after Mahaprabhu took sannyasa, Kesava Bharati began to sing and dance with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He joined in sankirtan and was immediately converted.

In this way, the sannyasa of Nimai Pandit took place. What is the meaning of His sannyasa? Is it redundant, auxiliary, or a necessary part of spiritual advancement? Is it desirable? What is the meaning of sannyasa?"

SANNYASA VERSE

Now we shall read from *Madhya-lila, Ch.3, text 6*, the famous *sannyasa* verse uttered by Mahaprabhu with purport by the World Acharya, His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Srila A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

*etam sa asthaya paratma-nistham
adhyasitam putvatamair mahadbhih*

*aham tarisyami duranta-param
tamo mukundanghri-nisevayaiva*

"I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krishna. This was approved by the previous acharyas, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

PURPORT

In connection with this verse, which is a quotation from Srimad Bhagavatam (11.23.58), Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura says that of the sixty-four items required for rendering devotional service, acceptance of the symbolic marks of sannyasa is a regulative principle. If one accepts the sannyasa order, his main business is to devote his life completely to the service of Mukunda, Krishna. If one does not completely devote his mind and body to the service of the Lord, he does not actually become a sannyasi. It is not simply a matter of changing dress. In Bhagavad-gita (6.1) it is also stated, anasritah karma-phalam karyam karma karoti yah sa sannyasi ca yogi ca: one who works devotedly for the satisfaction of Krishna is a sannyasi. The dress is not sannyasa, but the attitude of service to Krishna is.

The word paratma-nistha means being a devotee of Lord Krishna. Paramatma, the Supreme Person, is Krishna. Isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha. Those

who are completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Krishna in service are actually sannyasis. As a matter of formality, the devotee accepts the sannyasa dress as previous acharyas did. He also accepts the three dandas. Later Vishnuswami considered that accepting the dress of a tri-dandi was paratma-nistha. Therefore sincere devotees add another danda, the jiva-danda, to the three existing dandas. The Vaishnava sannyasi is known as a tridandi-sannyasi. The Mayavadi sannyasi accepts only one danda, not understanding the purpose of tri-danda."

SANNYASA DANDA

I am holding in my hands a *tri-danda* which is to be given to a Vaishnava at the time of *sannyasa* initiation. *Tri* in *sanskrit* means three and *danda* means stick or staff. Thus we have a *tri-danda* when three sticks are combined. In the purport of this verse it is said that Vishnu Swami added another *danda* to the already existing three *dandas*, making a total of four *dandas* in the *tri-danda* staff.

The first three *dandas* represent *kayo*, *mana*, *vakya* or body, mind and words. A *sannyasi* must wholesale dedicate these three things to the service of the Lord. Whatever activity a *sannyasi* performs with his body must be for the service of Krishna. Similarly, whatever he thinks and whatever he

speaks must be dedicated in the service of the Lord.

Vishnu Swami thought, "*paratma-nista*," that one danda should be added to represent the surrender of the soul at the lotus feet of the Lord. Thus four *dandas* now make up the staff of the *Tri-dandi Sannyasi*.

Later, many persons in the community of the Shiva Svami sampradaya gave up the atma-nistha (devotional service) of the Lord and followed the path of Shankaracharya. Instead of accepting 108 names, those in the Shiva Svami sampradaya follow the path of Shankaracharya and accept the ten names of sannyasa. Although Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the then existing order of sannyasa (namely eka-danda), He still recited a verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam about the Tridanda-sannyasa accepted by the brahmana of Avantipura. Indirectly He declared that within that eka-danda, one danda, four dandas existed as one. Accepting eka-danda-sannyasa without paratma-nistha (devotional service to Lord Krishna) is not acceptable to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

In addition, according to the exact regulative principles, one should add the jiva-danda to the tri-danda. These four dandas, bound together as one, are symbolic of unalloyed devotional service to the Lord. Because the eka-dandi-sannyasis of the Mayavada school are not devoted to the service of Krishna, they try to merge into the Brahman effulgence, which is a marginal position between material

and spiritual existence. They accept this impersonal position as liberation. Mayavadi sannyasis, not knowing that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was a tri-dandi, think of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as an eka-dandi-sannyasi. This is due to their vivarta, bewilderment. In Srimad-Bhagavatam there is no such thing as an eka-dandi-sannyasi; indeed, the tri-dandi-sannyasi is accepted as the symbolic representation of the sannyasa order. By citing this verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the sannyasa order recommended in Srimad-Bhagavatam. The Mayavadi sannyasis, who are enamored by the external energy of the Lord, cannot understand the mind of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

THREE IN ONE

It is mentioned in *Chaitanya-caritamrta* that Mahaprabhu received the *eka-danda* from Keshava Bharati at the time of his *sannyasa* initiation. After traveling in the forest and along the river for sometime, Mahaprabhu fell into an ecstatic trance of divine love. While in that ecstatic state, Lord Nityananda Prabhu decided to break the *eka-danda* of Mahaprabhu into three pieces and threw them into the river. Nityananda Prabhu broke the *eka-danda* of Mahaprabhu to show that there are three *dandas* in the *eka-danda* and that Ma-

haprabhu is a Vaishnava and not an impersonalist *mayavadi*.

Nityananda Prabhu did not like the idea that Mahaprabhu should have to carry a *danda* like an ordinary *sannyasi*. After all Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He is not bound to follow any regulative principles, although He may do so for the benefit of all fallen conditioned souls.

When Mahaprabhu awoke from His ecstatic trance, He inquired about the whereabouts of His *danda*. Nityananda Prabhu told Him that the *danda* had broken when the Lord fell down in ecstatic trance and thus He had thrown it into the river. On hearing this news Mahaprabhu externally showed some anger with Nityananda Prabhu, but internally He was very pleased.

To date, all the devotees of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, following in His footsteps, accept the sannyasa order and keep the sacred thread and tuft of unshaved hair. The ekadandi-sannyasis of the Mayavadi school give up the sacred thread and do not keep any tuft of hair. Therefore they are unable to understand the purport of tridanda-sannyasa, and as such they are not inclined to dedicate their lives to the service of Mukunda. They simply think of merging into the existence of Brahman because of their disgust with material existence. The acharyas who advocate the daiva-varnasrama

(the social order of catur-varnyam mentioned in Bhagavad-gita) do not accept the proposition of asura-varnasrama, which maintains that the social order of varna is indicated by birth.

The most intimate devotee of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, namely Gadadhara Pandit, accepted tridanda-sannyasa and also accepted Madhava Upadhyaya as his tridandi-sannyasi disciple. It is said that from this Madhavacarya the sampradaya known in western India as the Vallabhacarya-sampradaya has begun. Srila Gopala Bhatta Bose, who is known as a smṛti-acarya in the Gaudiya-Vaishnava-sampradaya, later accepted the tridanda-sannyasa order from Tridandipada Prabodhananda Saraswati. Although acceptance of Tridanda-sannyasa is not distinctly mentioned in the Gaudiya Vaishnava literature, the first verse of Srila Rupa Gosvami's Upadesamṛta advocates that one should accept the tridanda-sannyasa order by controlling the six forces:

vaco vegam manasah krodha- vegam
 jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam
 etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah
 sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat

"One who can control the forces of speech, mind, anger, belly, tongue, and genitals is known as a gosvami and is competent to accept disciples all over the world." The followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu never accepted the Mayavada order of sannyasa, and for this they cannot be blamed. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu accepted Sridhar Svami, who was a tridandi-

sannyasi, but the Mayavadi sannyasis, not understanding Sridhar Svami, sometimes think that Sridhar Svami belonged to the Mayavada eka-danda-sannyasa community. Actually this was not the case.

The verse, *etam sa asthaya paratma-nistham*, is chanted daily by the Vaishnava *sannyasis* of Mahaprabhu. That verse has been accepted by the followers of Mahaprabhu as carrying the spirit of *tridandi sannyasa*.

PURPOSE OF SANNYASA

What is this *sannyasa*? What is it's meaning? What is it's purpose? Here we have heard that the purpose of the *sannyasa* of Mahaprabhu is distinct from the Mayavada purpose. The Mayavada purpose is to push oneself towards merging or *moksha*, becoming one with the Supreme Brahman; to finish, to annihilate the individual *jiva*. Mahaprabhu's *sannyasa* is distinct from that; it is to dedicate oneself at the lotus feet of Mukunda. It is not for *moksha*, but it is for Mukunda, the great Lord Sri Krishna. It can be said that dedication and devotion is the purpose of the *sannyasa* order of life.

LINE OF SRI RUPA

Now we will read *The Line of Sri Rupa* from *Sri Guru and His Grace* by Srila Sridhar Maharaja.

The impersonalist transcendentalists say that once we are independent of the flesh connection, the consciousness of the human soul is the highest thing and that no finer, higher thing can exist. But the scriptures say that the Supersoul, or Paramatma, is superior in existence to the individual soul, and that the Bhagavan conception, the personal conception of God, is even higher. This begins with the Vasudeva conception: Krishna alone.

The Narayana conception is again higher. The Krishna conception again the highest, and even in the Krishna conception there are divisions. Dvaraka, Mathura, and Vrndavana. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the Srimad-Bhagavatam assert that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead: krsnas tu bhagavan svayam.

The Vrndavana conception of Krishna as the Supreme Entity is the highest because beauty is above all. Beauty is above all grandeur and power. Neither physical, mental, or intellectual power, nor any other power, but beauty and love is the ultimate controlling power. Absolute good is absolute beauty, and that is the absolute controller. Mercy is above justice.

Generally, we cannot conceive that any thing could be greater than justice; we think that justice must be the highest

principle. But we are told that mercy is above justice. And who can show mercy? Not an ordinary person, but only a king. One who can compensate for the loss in justice can give mercy. And the highest court is able to compensate everything. Such a realm exists. And there, the Lord is engaged in pastimes with his paraphernalia of equal quality. There is such a law, a provision beyond the sense of justice in our puppy brain.

Uddhava is recognized as the principle devotee of the Lord, and his statement about mercy is found in the Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.2.23):

aho baki yam stana-kala-kutam
 ighamsayapayayad apy asadhvi
 lebhe gatim dhatry-uctam tato 'nyam
 kam va dayalum saranam vrajema

He says, "Where else should I surrender? How can I surrender to anyone more merciful than Krishna, when I find that the demoness Putana in the garb of maternal affection went to kill Krishna, but instead received such a wonderful benediction that she was given a higher post as one of Krishna's mothers? My Lord is so kind, so benevolent. Where else should I surrender? Her poisoned breast was put into the mouth of the infant child Krishna, and she was blessed with such a high and affectionate post! So, how can we measure His grace, His infinite mercy? His ways and mercy are beyond all expectations." Rather than treating her with

justice, we find just the opposite, He showed magnanimous behavior towards His greatest enemy. So, beyond justice there is mercy, and such a high degree of mercy, such a quality and intensity of mercy that it cannot be measured. Uddhava prays, "where should I find such a standard of grace as this? I must fall flat at the divine feet of Lord Krishna. Why should any man of intelligence not run to fall flat at the feet of such a magnanimous personality as Krishna? His nature is that of the highest love."

We, the finite, should approach the infinite with this spirit: "If justice is applied, I have no hope. I omit that department. I have come only to seek my fortune in the department of mercy, where there is no calculation of right or wrong, of merit or demerit. I have come to that department, my Lord, because I do not know what is within me. When I analyze and study my own heart, I find that I am unknown to my own self. I am so helpless and wretched that I don't want any decision based on justice."

ONLY BY MERCY

Not by qualification. Only by mercy. We want only mercy. That is our highest necessity. We may try to qualify ourselves in so many ways but ultimately everything depends on Krishna's mercy. We may have to face the fact that even a high standard of rules and regulations is not the all in all. The rules of sadhana are there to give us some foundation, but

rules and regulations alone cannot conquer Krishna. We require Krishna's mercy and that mercy comes to us via the devotee. Therefore we must surrender to Krishna's devotee. If we can surrender to Krishna's devotee then we are guaranteed Krishna's mercy. But how to surrender and what is the meaning of surrender?

"I surrender. You may do whatever you like with me. I am the worst of sinners. What to do with me now is in your hands. You, Saviour, I have come to you. If there is any possibility-save me. This is my open appeal, my one-sided appeal." This sort of self-abnegation will automatically cleanse our hearts. By this attitude of sharanagati, or surrender, we invite the greatest attention from above. Sharanagati, surrender, is the only way to be reinstated in our lost prospect." (Rupa Goswami)

At present, we are disconnected from the prospect of divine love which we cherish in the innermost quarter of our hearts. If we want to have that privilege very easily and very quickly, we must approach the Lord with plain speaking, and with a naked body and mind, with everything exposed. Srila Rupa Goswami in Bhakti-rasamrtasindhu (1.2.154) has written:

mat-tulyo nasti papatma
naparadhi ca kascana
parihare 'pi lajja me
kim bruve purusottama

"My Lord, I feel ashamed. How shall I offer you so many pure things like flowers? Generally, pure things are offered to you, but what about me? I have come with the most filthy thing to offer to you. I feel ashamed. I have come to you, with only my shame, to beg for mercy. There is no parallel to my sinful, criminal life. Everything that can be conceived of as bad is found in me. It is very difficult even to speak about the characteristics of my heinous sins and crimes. Still, your nature, existence, fame, and benevolence cannot but attract me. You can save me. You can purify me. Hoping against hope, I have come to you. And I have only one solace, that I am the real object of your mercy. Your tendency is to purify the meanest. Those who are the most needy have some claim to your mercy. I am the worst of the needy and the meanest of the mean. This is my only qualification, my only hope to attract your attention and appeal to your magnanimity."

SPONTANEOUS LOVE

"Rupa Goswami says in his Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu (1.2.153) that still there is some sort of subconscious element within him:

yuvatinam yatha yuni
yunanca yuvatau yatha
mano 'bhiramate tadvan
mano 'bhiramatam tvayi

"Just as a young boy feels attraction for a young girl, I want that sort of attraction towards you. I want to be engrossed in you, forgetting all material paraphernalia. And by sincere surrender, at once, our progress begins. And the development of that kind of attraction takes us to the topmost rank.

I want that intimate connection with you, my Lord. I am the neediest of the needy, but at the same time I have this ambition: I am so disgusted with the world outside that I want the most intense and comprehensive relationship with you. With this attitude, the surrendering process begins and rises step by step. I want that standard of divine love, of intimacy with you. I want to dive deep within you."

GO TO SRIMATI RADHARANI

Rupa Goswami has asked, "I want that connection with You, give me that divine love for You, that thing I am begging." But Krishna is saying, "Do you want an intimate relationship with Me?"

govinda-vallabhe radhe
prarthaye tvam aham sada
tvadiyam iti janatu
govindo mam tvaya saha

This prayer is found in the Arcana Paddhati, which comes from Gopal Bhatta Goswami's edition of the Hari-bhakti-vilasa. From there it has sprung through him. It is there in the shastra, which is an eternal flow of a particular current of knowledge.

Everything is eternal in Vaikuntha and Goloka. Just as the sun comes up and goes down, appears and disappears, the thought is eternal and sometimes appears and disappears.

In this verse, govinda-vallabhe radhe, there is a sudden turn. Krishna says to his devotee, "Oh, do you want an intimate relationship with me? It is not to be found within my department. You will have to go to another department. Go then to the department of Radhika." Then, at once, the devotee's thought is transferred towards that side. All his energy is monopolized there. It is Her monopoly. "Your inner quest is not to be found within my department," Krishna says. "You'll have to go elsewhere and file a petition there."

And with this inspiration, at once the devotee puts his petition to Radharani: govinda-vallabhe radhe: "O, Sri Radhe, your master and sustainer is Govinda. He is the Lord of your heart." Govinda means, "He who can give fulfillment to all our senses." With our senses we can feel perception as well as knowledge. Govinda is the master who gives fulfillment to all our channels of perception. Govinda is your Lord. But just the opposite is also true. You are mistress of the heart of Govinda, the Supreme Master. Is it not? You are queen of the heart of Govinda. I have been directed to come to you

with my petition. Please enlist my name in your department and admit me as a servitor in your group.

radhe vrndavanadhise
karunamrta-vahini
krpaya nija-padabja
dasyam mahyam pradiyatam

"O Radhe, O Queen of Vrndavana, You are like a flowing river filled with the nectar of mercy. Please be kind upon me, and bestow upon me some small service at Your lotus feet. You are the queen of the whole management of ecstasy."

RADHARANI REVEALS KRISHNA

Krishna says, "It is not with Me. What you want cannot be gotten with Me. You will have to go elsewhere and there you will have to file your petition." One may surrender to Krishna and approach Krishna, then when we are most fortunate Krishna directs us to the camp of Srimati Radharani. It is a great blessing to receive this kind of internal guidance from Krishna.

Some devotees want a relationship with Krishna directly. They do not realize the importance of Srimati Radharani. Actually the fulfill-

ment of their hearts desire will be found in the camp of Srimati Radharani. The real petition should be for Her grace, and not to have a direct relationship with Krishna. It is considered to be a great benediction when Krishna transfers one's focus in that way, to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani.

HALO OF RADHARANI

In the beginning of Krishna consciousness we must have some *shraddha*, faith. That faith is the essence of the *hladhini shakti*. Faith is the halo of Srimati Radharani. Faith alone can reveal the position of Krishna. Faith is greater than knowledge, greater than material calculation.

SURRENDER

Faith leads us to surrender to Krishna. Surrender or sharanagati is the effulgence of Krishna. When we approach Krishna through faith and surrender He reveals our service relationship with Him. When our faith and surrender are most intense, Krishna reveals to us the camp of His most confidential servants, the camp of Srimati Radharani.

Our real interest lies there in the department of

Srimati Radharani. Now we come to the department of Radharani. But is there a prospect beyond that? Is there any place from which we might get even a drop more attention in the way of mercy. Is there anything more beneficial for us? Yes, there is. And that position one may achieve by the grace of Srila Rupa Goswami.

WHO IS SRILA RUPA GOSWAMI?

Who is Rupa? Rupa Manjari. Generally the hierarchy in the spiritual world is eternal. New recruits can occupy a particular rank of manjari, assistant, in madhurya rasa. And the leader of the manjaris is Sri Rupa Manjari. What is the special feature in the manjari camp which is not found among the sakhis, girlfriends of Krishna? First there is Radharani, then the camp of her right-hand personal attendant, Lalita. Then, under Lalita, there is Sri Rupa Manjari. What is the unique position of the followers of Sri Rupa? The new recruits can attain to that status. Now, the privilege of this manjari class we are to conceive most respectfully and attentively.

When Radha and Govinda are in secrecy, in a private place, the sakhis, who are well-versed in the art of that kind of play, because they are a little grown-up, do not like to

approach there to disturb their confidential mixing. If the more grown-up sakhis, enter there, both Radha and Govinda will feel shy. So, their presence may create some disturbance. But the younger can enter there, and then Radha and Govinda have no hesitation in free mixing. So, in that highest stage of the mixing of Radha-Govinda, the free play of Radha-Govinda, these manjaris, the younger girls, can have admission. But the grown-up sakhis cannot have admission there. New recruits may come up to the manjari class. And the manjaris have that sort of special advantage under the leadership of Sri Rupa Manjari. So they get the best advantage there; the most sacred type of pure service, which is not open even to the sakhis, is open to the manjaris. That is found in Radharani's camp. So, the position of the rupanugas, the followers of Sri Rupa, is the most profitable position. That has been given out by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. That has been shown by Him, and that is fixed as the highest limit of our fortune in Krsna's concern. This is unexpected, undesignable and beyond hope, but our prospect lies there in that subtle camp of Sri Rupa Manjari, Rupa Goswami.

So, the camp, the sampradaya of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is known as the rupanuga sampradaya. There our fate and our fortune is located. Now we have to conduct ourself in such a way that naturally we can connect with that highest, purest spiritual conception, from here. We must not allow ourselves to be satisfied with anything less than this highest ideal. That should be the highest goal of our life. And we must adjust our approach from our present position."

RAGHUNATHA DASA

With this conception we can approach the highest meaning of the sannyasa ashrama. It is not external but the most internal—to come to the divine service of Srimati Radharani in the camp of the *manjaris*. That position has also been shown by Raghunatha dasa Goswami and it has been accepted by the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the highest aspiration in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya.

In this connection Srila Sridhar Maharaja used to tell the following story; (from *The Loving Search for the Lost Servant*)

NO INTEREST IN KRISHNA

Once, the Diwan of Bharatpur had come on a pilgrimage with his family to the holiest of places, Sri Radha-kunda, the holy lake of Srimati Radharani. He and his family were circumambulating Radha-kunda. They would fall flat on the ground, offering obeisances lying down with their arms outstretched. Everytime they bowed down in this way they would mark the spot where their fingertips touched the earth. Then they would slowly rise, step forward to where that spot

had been marked, and again fall flat, offering their obeisances with great respect and adoration. In this way they were circumambulating the entire Radha-kunda. Upon seeing such intense worship, Paramananda Prabhu, an intimate disciple of our guru maharaja Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, intimated to Prabhupada that the Diwan and his family must have great respect for Radharani to circumambulate the Radha-kunda in such a fashion.

At that time Prabhupada said, "Their angle of vision towards Radha-kunda and Radharani is different from ours. They recognize and revere Krishna. And because Radharani is Krsna's favorite, they also have some reverence for Radha-kunda. But our vision is just the opposite. Our concern is with Radharani. And only because She wants Krishna do we have any connection with Him."

And so, the Gaudiya Vaishnavas know only Radharani. They are concerned only with Her, and Her duties, Her necessities. They are ready to serve Her in all respects, and cannot contemplate any service without Her. That is the highest achievement of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas, that is the special feature of Mahaprabhu's party, and that was announced by Raghunatha Dasa Goswami in his Vilapa-kusumanjali (102):

asabharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathancit
 kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi
 tvam cet kṛpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me
 pranair vraje na ca varoru bakarīnapi

This verse is a direct prayer to Radharani. It expresses a particular type of hope which is so sweet and reassuring that it is compared with an unlimited ocean of nectar. He says, "There is a hope which is sustaining me and nurturing my existence. With that hope I am somehow passing my days, dragging my life through these tedious times. That nectarine ocean of hope is attracting me and keeping me alive. But my patience has reached its end. I can't endure it any longer. I can't wait any more.

At this moment if You do not show Your grace to me, I am finished. I shall lose my prospect forever. I shall have no desire to continue my life. It will all be useless. Without Your grace, I can't stand to live another moment. And Vrndavana, which is even dearer to me than my life itself—I am disgusted with it. It is painful; it is always pinching me. And what to speak of anything else, I am even disgusted with Krishna. It is shameful to utter such words, but I can have no love even for Krishna unless and until You take me within your confidential camp of service." This is the prayer of Raghunatha Dasa.

When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada would begin to explain this verse, his figure would become transformed. He would become full of emotion; his face would become like that of a phantom.

In this verse, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, taking an extreme risk, says, "O Radha, if I do not get Your favor, I don't want anything. I want You and You alone. To have an independent relationship with anyone else, eliminating You

is impossible in my life. You must be first, and then others. Without You, we can never even think of a separate relationship with Krishna."

RASARAJA MAHABHAVA

In the beginning of this initiation program we heard how Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa*. He became mad after Krishna. However, we also heard that the devotees became mad after Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. One devotee, the father of Srinivasa Acharya, began to chant, "Chaitanya! Chaitanya!" and nothing else. He became mad after Mahaprabhu.

In the Chaitanya Bhagavat it is said, *sri krishna chaitanya radha krishna nahe anya..* That is, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Radha and Krishna combined. Mahaprabhu is Krishna Himself, Rasaraja, and He is Radha, Mahabhava. Rasaraja-Mahabhava is Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He is Krishna coming in the mood of Srimati Radharani.

Mahaprabhu took His *sannyasa mantra* from Keshava Bharati after giving the proper Gaudiya Vaishnava conception, "I am His, I am Krishna's, and Krishna is mine." A most suitable *mantra* for Mahaprabhu. Why? Because He is in the mood of

a devotee, in the mood of Srimati Radharani. But later, when the *Gaudiya sampradaya* developed through the line of the Six Goswamis of Vrindaban, many esoteric aspects of consideration manifested.

SELF MADE SANNYASI

From the time of the Six Goswamis until now the *sannyasa mantra* given to the *tridandi sannyasis* has been different than the *mantra* received by Mahaprabhu. The *mantra* given at present was first given by Sanatana Goswami. However, until the time of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura the *tridandi sannyasa* of the Gaudiya Vaishnava line was not visible. In 1918 Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura took *sannyasa* from a photo of Srila Gour Kishore Das Babaji Maharaja. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta is known as a self-made *sannyasi*, a self-manifest *sannyasi*.

It was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta who organized the present standard of the Gaudiya Vaishnava *sannyasa*. The dress, the *danda* etc. everything was done by him. The *mantra* which he gave was the same as the one given by the Babaji class such as Gour Kishore Das Babaji Maharaja and Jagannatha Das Babaji Maharaja. This same *mantra* is presently being given to all the *sannyasis* in the Gaudiya Vaishnava line.

I AM HER SERVANT

So that everyone present here today may have a correct idea of the *mantra*, I shall explain the following: The *mantra* to be given here is not the same *mantra* that was given to Mahaprabhu i.e., *tattvamasi*, with the conception or purport that "I am His." Rather it is a different *mantra* which has been prepared, and it's meaning is "I am Her servant" i.e. *Radha dasyam*. Not, "I am His." "I am His," means I surrender myself to Krishna, He is my Lord and master. But in the *sannyasa mantra* the meaning comes "I am Her servant", *Radha dasyam*. "I aspire for the service of the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani."

The *mantra* of Mahaprabhu is of a different conception because He is Krishna in the mood of Radharani searching for Himself. In this connection it is said that Gour Kishore dasa Babaji Maharaja has taken from the stem of the lotus flower of Mahaprabhu's lotus feet, the sweet taste of Radharani's *bhava* for Krishna. He worships that. And he adores that.

The topmost devotees of Mahaprabhu see the mood of Radharani in Him, not the mood of Krishna. Not Rasaraja, but Mahabhava or Radharani, who is experiencing the greatest ecstasy of service to Krishna. So the *sannyasa* followers of

Mahaprabhu have focused on that. For them to chant a *mantra* that means "I am His," is unacceptable. Just like Mahaprabhu could not live with the conception "I am that." Absolutely not. No. "I am His." Similarly, the followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, from the Six Goswamis until now, all accept the service of Srimati Radharani as the highest goal of life. Exclusive dedication to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani is their heart and soul.

The Gaudiya *sampradaya* focuses exclusively on the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani. This concept we find living in our guardians, in our spiritual masters, in our great preceptors. And we try to serve that.

A question may arise here. What will be our service to Srimati Radharani in this mundane world?

SANKIRTAN LILA MEANS RASA LILA

In the conditioned state of material existence it is not possible to directly serve Srimati Radharani. Again our focus comes, that we will serve Srimati Radharani by serving Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu under the guidance of Sri Rupa

Goswami. Our service to Srimati Radharani is to serve the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu. And what is that service to Mahaprabhu? That is the Sankirtan Movement of Mahaprabhu, the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna and the preaching of Krishna consciousness all over the world. Service to Srimati Radharani means preaching Krishna consciousness all over the world.

In the days of Srila Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, he used to say at the time of giving *sannyasa* to his disciples, "Now you must preach Krishna consciousness all over the world." And in the days of Srila Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja he would sometimes tell at the time of giving *sannyasa*, "Now service to Krishna is finished and service to Srimati Radharani begins." Preaching Krishna consciousness and service to Srimati Radharani are synonymous at the lotus feet of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The *sankirtan* of Mahaprabhu means the *rasa-lila* of Radha-Govinda. It is their most intimate *rasa*! Thus we will find our highest fulfillment, our highest aspiration in serving the Sankirtan Movement of Mahaprabhu, coupled with this meditation that we are the servants of the servants of the servants of Srimati Radharani, who is the dearest servant of Lord Govinda.

SWEETNESS OF HER SERVICE

Krishna finds so much sweetness in the service of Srimati Radharani that when Srimati Radharani excused Herself from the rasa dance, which included millions of *gopis*, Krishna could not find any *madhu*—any *madhurya* or sweetness in the *rasa-lila*. The service offered by millions of other *gopis* could not equal even a drop of the sweet service and love that comes from Srimati Radharani. Our vision is that She alone is the topmost servant of Krishna. Any service to Krishna, which is going to be pleasing to the Lord, must come through Her agency.

REPRESENTATIVE OF SRIMATI RADHARANI

This raises an interesting point regarding the spiritual master. The spiritual master may be perceived differently according to the *adhikari* or the position of the devotee in terms of his spiritual advancement. This is similar to how one may perceive the position of the sun according to one's position on earth. Someone is sitting here in India and he sees the sun is rising. If we go towards the

east and find someone sitting in Hong Kong he will say that the sun is at twelve o'clock. And yet further to the east in Hawaii, at the same moment, one will see that the sun is setting. According to one's position the sun may be perceived at different places in the sky. Similarly, according to the *adhikari* of the devotee, the spiritual master is perceived differently.

The neophyte, the *kanista adhikari*, perceives the spiritual master as non-different from God. Therefore he may think that if the spiritual master miss-spells a word, the dictionary should be changed. The *madhyama adhikari* sees the spiritual master as being an empowered representative of God—the *shaktavesha avatara*, the *shakti*—specific empowered energy of the Supreme Lord; such as being the representative of Lord Nityananda or Baladeva, the original spiritual master.

In the *uttama* stage of devotion one sees the spiritual master as directly representing the camp of Srimati Radharani. That is the *uttama vision*. That is considered the first class, the highest concept of the spiritual master—that he represents a particular refined group of servitors within the divine *lila* of Krishna. And in the case of the Gaudiya Sampradaya, cent percent the *acharyas* are seen as being representatives of the camp of Srimati Radharani. That is our line.

Like that, the meditation in our *sampradaya* comes to the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, and in the prayer of Raghunatha das it is so exclusive, that he says, "I don't even care for Krishna." That without Srimati Radharani I have no hope. My only interest in Krishna is because She is interested. And Śrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, he told that also.

NOT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

This is not a topic of discussion meant for the general public. When we go out preaching the Sankirtan movement, we are not preaching *Radha dasyam* directly but we are preaching *Krishna dasyam*, service to Krishna. First surrender to Krishna. The high prospect of *Radha dasyam* that we are discussing is not conceivable by the beginners. It is revealed by Krishna to those who are most surrendered and most fortunate. That is a special grace of Krishna to His devotees. It is not for the general public. It is for the internal group of the Lords most intimate devotees.

It is said that Śrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was such a great devotee of Srimati Radharani and yet he never spoke of Her publicly. One day, however, at a public program a man stood and minimized the position of Srimati Radharani.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura could not tolerate this. Then again, he did not want to speak publicly about Srimati Radharani. What to do? Srimati Radharani's name had been minimized in some way, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura then began to speak of the super excellent position of Srimati Radharani in order to establish Her true glory.

While speaking about Srimati Radharani, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura became so emotional, so absorbed in remembrance, and so immersed in his exclusive dedication to Srimati Radharani, that he lost connection with the external world and fell unconscious. Such was the profound dedication of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur for Srimati Radharani.

We have heard many wonderful things on this auspicious day of the appearance of Srimati Radharani and it is now time to proceed with the *sannyasa* initiation ceremony by giving the *tri-danda*, the *sannyasa* title and name (Bhakti Gaurava Vaishnava Maharaja), and the *sannyasa mantra*.

Jayate! Sri Sri Guru Gouranga kijay!
Goura Premanandi Hari Hari Bol!

(The *sannyasa mantra* with translation and purport is available and can be seen by initiated *sannyasis* of the Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya upon request from H.H. Swami Sripada Narasingha Maharaja at the Rupanuga Bhajan Ashram, International Gaudiya Vaishnava Society, 177 Rangaji Nagla, Vrndavana, U.P. 281121, India.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

His Holiness Swami Narasingha (American, age 46) is a leading disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a faithful admirer of the divine instructions given by Srila Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja as imparted in the Gaudiya Sampradaya in the line of the Six Goswamis, headed by Shri Rupa, the chief disciple of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

To distribute the message of the Gaudiya sampradaya His Holiness Swami Narasingha established the International Gaudiya Vaishnava Society in 1988 with its world headquarters at Shri Vrndavana Dham, the abode of Lord Shri Krishna.

His Holiness Swami Narasingha is also the author of several books and innumerable articles and essays on the science of the Krishna conception.



*etam sa asthaya paratma-nistham
adhyasitam putvatamair mahadbhih
aham tarisyami duranta-param
tamo mukundanghri-nisevayaiva*

“I shall cross over the insurmountable ocean of nescience by being firmly fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Krishna. This was approved by the previous *acharyas*, who were fixed in firm devotion to the Lord, Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

... If one does not completely devote his mind and body to the service of the Lord, he does not actually become a *sannyasi*. It is not simply a matter of changing dress. In *Bhagavad-gita* (6.1) it is also stated, *anasritah karma-phalam karyam karma karoti yah sa sannyasi ca yogi ca*: one who works devotedly for the satisfaction of Krishna is a *sannyasi*. The dress is not *sannyasa*, but the attitude of service to Krishna is.

The word *paratma-nistha* means being a devotee of Lord Krishna. Paramatma, the Supreme Person, is Krishna. *Isvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigraha*. Those who are completely dedicated to the lotus feet of Krishna in service are actually *sannyasis*.